

# Wycombe rise to the occasion

When the idea of the Anglo-Italian Semi-professional Trophy was announced, there was some scepticism about the whole venture. Some felt the project would involve too much cash, others that the matches would not provoke enough interest. "A glorified friendly" was one description.

But with the first competition now over — there are few who would not agree that the whole venture has been a huge success. In all, over 8,000 people watched the two matches and in both games the standard of football was extremely high. Certainly at Loakes Park, Wycombe Wanderers played their best soccer of the season while the first leg in Monza provided first class entertainment.

Wycombe were selected for this trophy, devised by Mr. Gigi Peronace, as winners of the Rothmans Isthmian League in 1973-74. Monza won their division of the Italian League. Detailed plans were made by both sides and the dates announced.

Before agreeing to take part in the venture, Wanderers had to make sure they could cover themselves financially. They approached several firms in High Wycombe which agreed to underwrite some of the expenses involved. The real importance of the competition was brought home to the club when they were given V.I.P. treatment by ALITALIA on the flight over on September 24th, which included "chambers" for the officials. The party also received a warm reception in Italy. The officials were guests at a civic reception and everyone received gifts from the Monza club.

As to the game, Wanderers went down 1-0 and felt quite happy with the result too. The players were impressed by the Italians' skill. With temperatures up in the 70's and playing in front of a 4,000 partisan crowd, they did well to restrict Monza to the one goal.

The party returned after a day's sight-seeing in Milan and busily started preparations for the return leg on October 8th. Response to tickets in Wycombe was poor but on the night, 4,000 people turned up to watch another fine game. Before that, the Monza officials were met and entertained by their Wycombe counterparts.

Gifts were once again exchanged between the clubs and after the national anthems, the match got underway. Although obviously guarding their one goal advantage from the first leg, Monza brought frequent applause from the crowd for their attacking skills. But they couldn't have bargained for the sort of performance Wanderers produced. John Delaney and Dylan Evans scored two first half goals and with Wycombe working like trojans, Monza just couldn't get back into the game.

In both matches the standard of football was exceptionally high while the spirit and conduct on both occasions was faultless. The magnificent £3,000 trophy was presented to winning skipper John Delaney by Mr. Ugo Cessani, president of the competition, and both teams

—by—  
**Stuart Earp**  
of the Bucks Free Press

received medals (gold for the winners, silver for the losers). Altogether £4,000 was spent on the prizes.

All in all, the competition proved a great success with Anglo-Italian relations strengthened considerably for the future.